

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE: MIDAMERICAN ENERGY COMPANY	DOCKET NO. WRU-01-12-156
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ORDER APPROVING REVISIONS TO CUSTOMER CONTRIBUTION FUND

(Issued April 4, 2001)

On March 14, 2001, MidAmerican Energy Company (MidAmerican) filed with the Utilities Board (Board) a request for approval to amend the eligibility requirements for its customer contribution fund, known as the I CARE Emergency Heating Assistance Program (I CARE). The amendments would allow I CARE to accept a significant contribution from United Way of the Quad Cities (United Way). In the alternative, MidAmerican requested a waiver of 199 IAC 20.15 to allow the contribution to be accepted.

MidAmerican has on file an approved customer contribution fund plan pursuant to 199 IAC 20.15(2). Under MidAmerican's current plan, applicant's annual income must be at or below state guidelines for the low-income heating energy assistance program (LIHEAP) to be eligible to receive I CARE assistance. United Way has approached MidAmerican about a contribution to the fund that would assist program applicants who fall outside LIHEAP guidelines. MidAmerican seeks to change its plan to allow exceptions to state LIHEAP requirements at the request of the contributing party when the lump sum contribution is \$10,000 or more.

Subrule 20.15(4) allows organizations such as United Way to contribute to matching I CARE funds. Pursuant to 199 IAC 20.15(1), each utility is to develop a program "to supplement" assistance received under LIHEAP. MidAmerican said the changes in I CARE requirements are necessary and that this past winter's increase in natural gas prices highlighted the need to assist a segment of the customer population which had not previously been eligible for I CARE benefits.

The Board will approve the changes to I CARE. Matching contributions to I CARE should be encouraged and those funds, if the donor desires, can be earmarked for those who need assistance but fall outside LIHEAP guidelines. The Board recognizes that the increase in gas costs has been a tremendous burden to some customers who do not qualify for LIHEAP assistance. The Board views these contributions as supplementing LIHEAP assistance and, therefore, a waiver is not required.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

The amendments to MidAmerican's customer contribution fund filed on March 14, 2001, are approved.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ Allan T. Thoms

/s/ Susan J. Frye

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary

/s/ Diane Munns

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 4th day of April, 2001.